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THE BLESSED DAMOZEL
AS FIRST WRITTEN BY DANTE
GABRIEL ROSSETTI AND PUB-
LISHED IN "THE GERM" IN
1850 * * REPRINTED FOR M. F.
MANSFIELD, TWENTY-TWO E.
SIXTEENTH STREET, NEW YORK
MDCCCXCVIII. * * * * *



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THE BLESSED DAMOZEL



AS FIRST WRITTEN BY DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI
AND FIRST PUBLISHED IN "THE GERM" IN 1850



2nd COPY,
1896.

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FOREWORD.

It was in 1848 that the little band of Pre-Raphaelites of whom Dante Gabriel Rossetti was primus inter pares, first formed themselves into a constituent body, with avowed aims, and it was in the same year that "The Blessed Damozel" sprang to birth.

Then came, in 1850, the short-lived organ of that enthusiastic few, *The Germ*, which lasted through four numbers, and in this transitory expression of Pre-Raphaelite aims, creed and conscience the "Damozel," with several other of Rossetti's poems, first held converse with the world.

The Germ was really "an official manifesto or apologia of Pre-Raphaelitism:" all that it had to preach was the noble doctrine of the sacredness, the saving grace, of conscience in art.

There are those who deem the later and extended form of "The Blessed Damozel" superior to the original inspiration. But it has been rightly said that in the proportion that Rossetti rewrote the poem he marred that power which one feels to be inherent in the utter simplicity of the original, a power which Blake says is the page of Inspiration, the ability to see imaginary objects and dramatic actions,—physically as well as mentally,—and flashing them upon the imaginations (even upon the corporal senses) of others.

It is from complete accord with this judgment as regards the poet and the poem that the following reprint of "The Blessed Damozel" in its original form as it appeared in 1850 in *The Germ* (from which it is taken) is offered to the public.

SONNET TO D. G. R.

Master, whose very names have god-like power
Of song and light divine, being his who went 
Unscathed through blearing fire omnipotent,
Singing for men ; and his who, hour by hour,
Stands in the imminent and splendid shower
Of God's effulgence ; and being lastly blent
With the warm light and odour effluent
Of your own rhymes, our latest, loveliest dower,
Not in our own land could my weakness mock
Your strength with homages of my poor May-day;
The applause of circling poets scared my song.
But here, where twenty thousand thunders shock
The violent air for leagues of dim sea-way,
Surely my heart may speak, nor do you wrong !

EDMUND GOSSE.

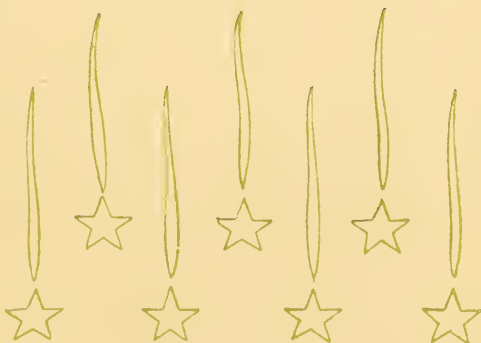
Outside Bergen Harbour, August, 1871.

THE BLESSED DAMOZEL.

I.

The blessed Damozel leaned out
From the gold bar of Heaven:
Her blue grave eyes were deeper
much

Than a deep water, even.
She had three lilies in her hand,
And the stars in her hair were
seven.

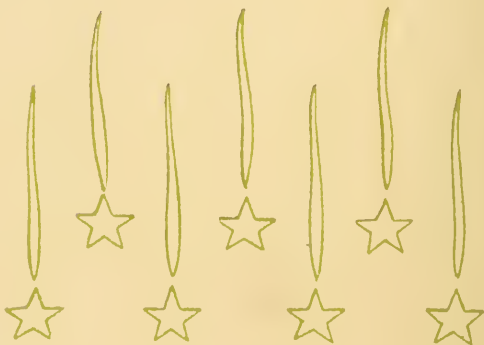


B. McM.

THE BLESSED DAMOZEL.

II.

Her robe, ungirt from clasp to hem,
No wrought flowers did adorn,
But a white rose of Mary's gift
On the neck meetly worn;
And her hair, lying down her back,
Was yellow like ripe corn.



III.

Herseemed she scarce had been a
day
One of God's choristers ; "
The wonder was not yet quite gone
From that still look of her's ;
Albeit to them she left, her day
Had counted as ten years.



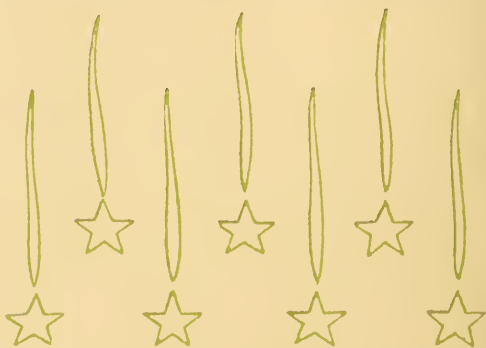
THE BLESSED DAMOZEL.

IV.

(To one it is ten years of years:
. . . Yet now, here in this place,
Surely she leaned o'er me,—her
hair

Fell all about my face. . . .
Nothing: the Autumn—fall of
leaves.

The whole year sets apace.)



B. McM.

THE BLESSED DAMOZEL.

V.

It was the terrace of God's house
That she was standing on,
By God built over the sheer depth
In which Space is begun;
So high that looking downward
thence,
She could scarce see the sun.



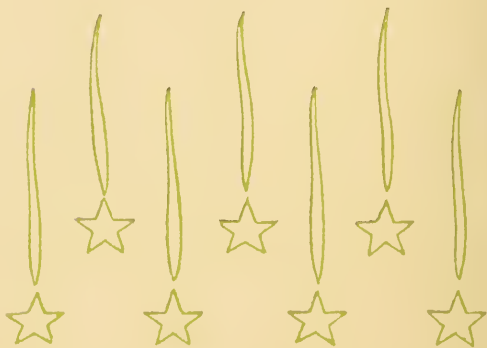
B. Mc M.



THE BLESSED DAMOZEL.

VI.

It lies from Heaven across the flood
Of ether, as a bridge.
Beneath, the tides of day and night
With flame and blackness ridge
The void, as low as where this
earth
Spins like a fretful midge.



B. M. O. M.

THE BLESSED DAMOZEL.

VII.

But in those tracts, with her, it was
The peace of utter light
And silence. For no breeze may stir
Along the steady flight
Of seraphim; no echo there,
Beyond all depth or height.

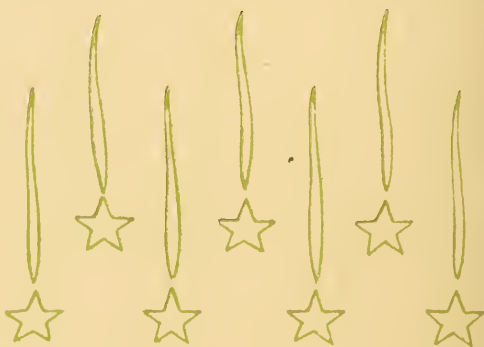


B. McM.

THE BLESSED DAMOZEL.

VIII.

Heard hardly, some of her new
friends,
Playing at holy games,
Spake,gentle-mouthed, among them-
selves,
Their virginal chaste names;
And the souls, mounting up to God,
Went by her like thin flames.



B. Mc M.

THE BLESSED DAMOZEL.

IX.

And still she bowed herself and
stooped
Into the vast waste calm;
Till her bosom's pressure must have
made
The bar she leaned on warm,
And the lilies lay as if asleep
Along her bended arm.

D. A.



B. McM.

THE BLESSED DAMOZEL.

X.

From the fixt lull of Heaven, she
saw

Time, like a pulse, shake fierce
Through all the worlds. Her gaze
still strove,

In that steep gulph, to pierce
The swarm: and then she spake,
as when

The stars sang in their spheres.



THE BLESSED DAMOZEL.

XI.

“I wish that he were come to me,
For he will come,” she said.

“Have I not prayed in solemn
Heaven?

On earth, has he not prayed?
Are not two prayers a perfect
strength?
And shall I feel afraid.



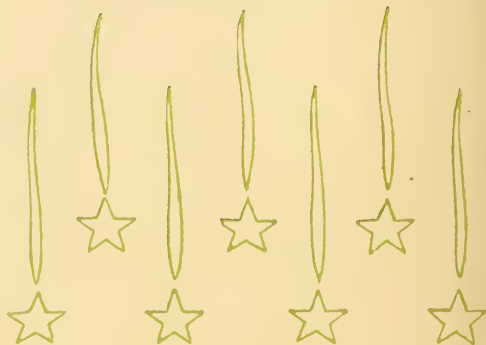
B. McM.



THE BLESSED DAMOZEL.

XII.

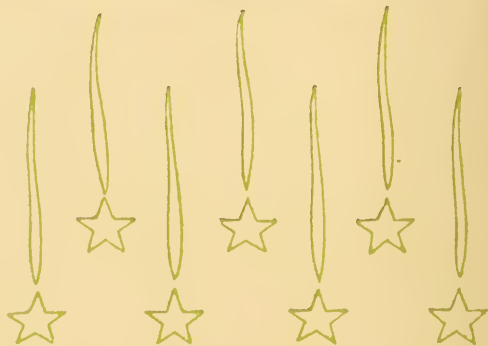
“When round his head the aureole
 clings,
And he is clothed in white,
I'll take his hand, and go with him
 To the deep wells of light,
And we will step down as to a
 stream
And bathe there in God's sight.



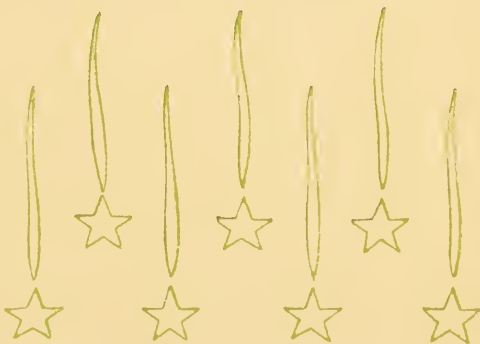
“We two will stand beside that
shrine,
Occult, withheld, untrod,
Whose lamps tremble continually
With prayer sent up to God ;
And where each need, revealed, ex-
pects
Its patient period.



“ We two will lie i’ the shadow of
That living mystic tree
Within whose secret growth the
Dove
Sometimes is felt to be,
While every leaf that His plumes
touch
Saith His name audibly.

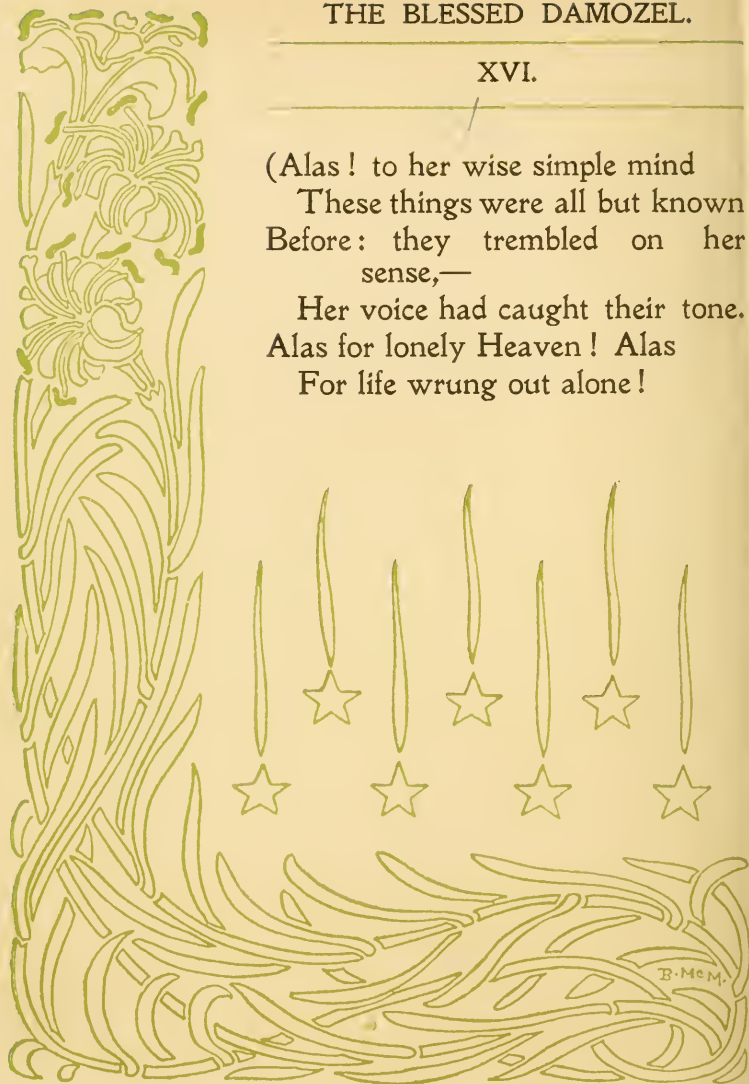
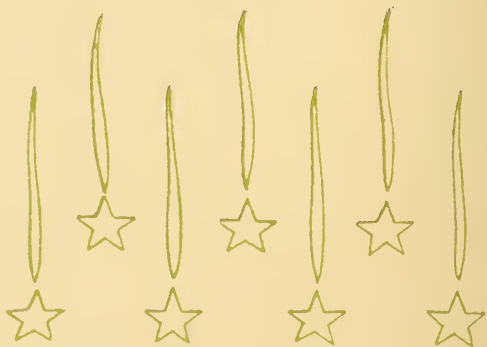


“And I myself will teach to him—
I myself, lying so,—
The songs I sing here; which his
mouth
Shall pause in, hushed and slow,
Finding some knowledge at each
pause
And some new thing to know.”



(Alas ! to her wise simple mind
These things were all but known
Before : they trembled on her
sense,—

Her voice had caught their tone.
Alas for lonely Heaven ! Alas
For life wrung out alone !

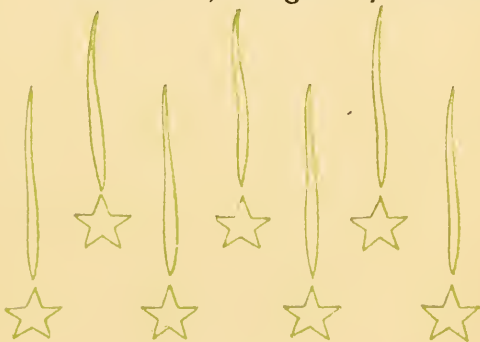


Alas, and though the end were
reached? . . .

Was thy part understood
Or borne in trust? And for her
sake

Shall this too be found good?—
May the close lips that knew not
prayer

Praise ever, though they would?)



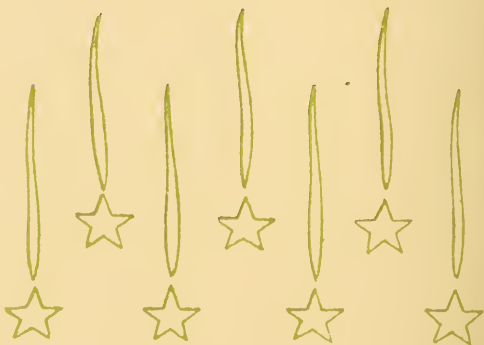
THE BLESSED DAMOZEL.

XVIII.

“We two,” she said, “will seek
the groves

Where the lady Mary is,
With her five handmaidens, whose
names

Are five sweet symphonies:—
Cecily, Gertrude, Magdalen,
Margaret and Rosalys.

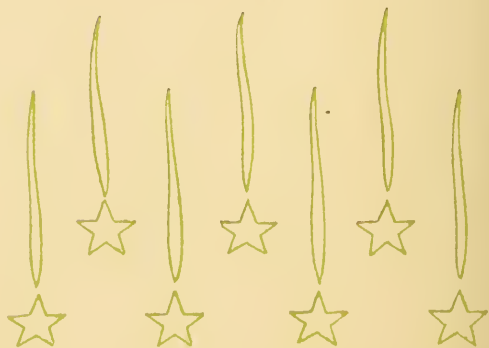


“Circle-wise sit they, with bound
locks

And bosoms covered;
Into the fine cloth, white like flame,
Weaving the golden thread,
To fashion the birth-robcs for them
Who are just born, being dead.



“He shall fear haply, and be dumb.
Then I will lay my cheek
To his, and tell about our love,
Not once abashed or weak :
And the dear Mother will approve
My pride, and let me speak.



“Herself shall bring us, hand in
hand,

To Him round whom all souls
Kneel—the unnumber’d solemn
heads

Bowed with their aureoles:
And Angels, meeting us, shall sing
To their citherns and citoles.



B. McM.

Thus much for him and me:—
To have more blessing than on
earth

In nowise ; but to be
As then we were,—being as then
At peace. Yea, verily.



B. MEM.

“Yea, verily ; when he is come
We will do thus and thus :
Till this my vigil seem quite strange
And almost fabulous ;
We two will live at once, one life ;
And peace shall be with us.”

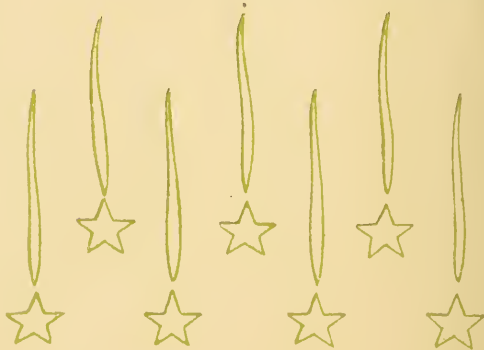


B.M.E.M.

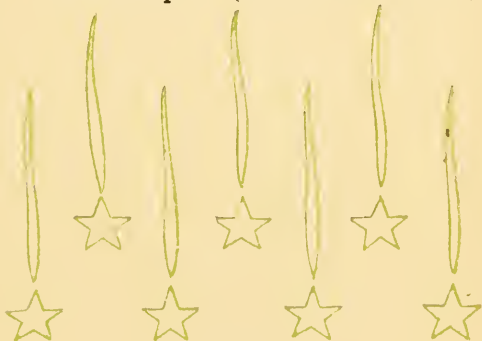
She gazed, and listened, and then
said,

Less sad of speech than mild:
"All this is when he comes." She
ceased:

The light thrilled past her, filled
With Angels, in strong level lapse.
Her eyes prayed, and she smiled.



(I saw her smile.) But soon their
flight
Was vague 'mid the poised
spheres.
And then she cast her arms along
The golden barriers,
And laid her face between her
hands,
And wept. (I heard her tears.)



JONES

THE BLESSED DAMOZEL.

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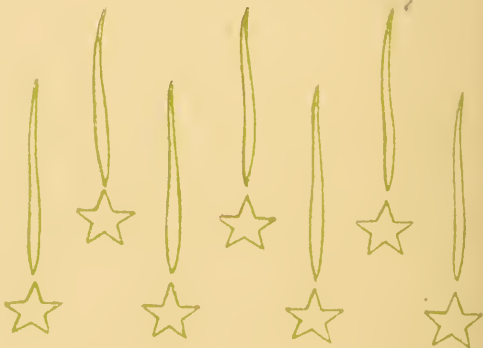
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